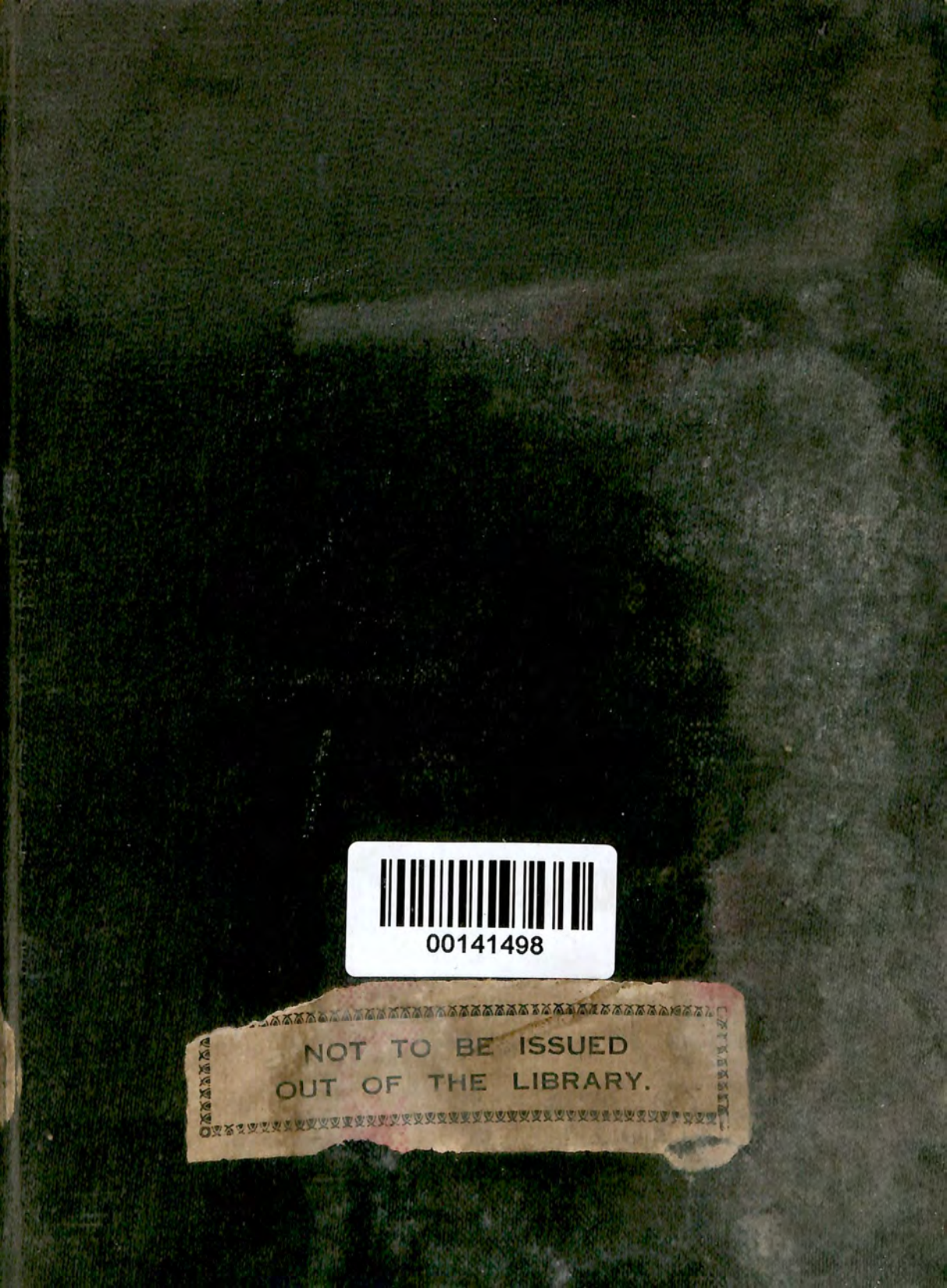
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THE

WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

A POEM.

Painted by Sir George Beaumont.

Engraved by J.C.Bromley.

"Look, there she is, my Child!—draw near;
She fears not — wherefore should we fear?
She means no harm.—but still the Boy,
To whom the words were softly said,
Hung back.....

.....

.... Again the Mother whispered low,
Now you have seen the FAMOUS OX!

THE

WHITE DOE

OF

RYLSTONE;

OR

THE FATE OF THE NORTONS.

A POEM.

BY

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

14498

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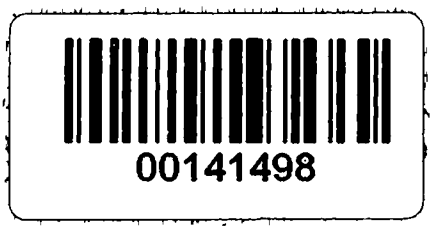


ADVERTISEMENT.

During the summer of 1807, *the Author visited, for the first time, the beautiful Scenery that surrounds Bolton Priory, in Yorkshire; and the Poem of* The White Doe, *founded upon a Tradition connected with the place, was composed at the close of the same year.*

" Weak is the will of Man, his judgement blind ;
" Remembrance persecutes, and Hope betrays ;
" Heavy is woe ;—and joy, for human kind,
" A mournful thing, so transient is the blaze !"—
Thus might he *paint our lot of mortal days*
Who wants the glorious faculty, assigned
To elevate the more-than-reasoning Mind,
And colour life's dark cloud with orient rays.
Imagination is that sacred power,
Imagination lofty and refined :
'Tis her's to pluck the amaranthine Flower
Of Faith, and round the Sufferer's temples bind
Wreaths that endure affliction's heaviest shower,
And do not shrink from sorrow's keenest wind.

" They that deny a God, destroy Man's nobility : for certainly Man is of kinn to the Beasts by his Body ; and if he be not of kinn to God by his Spirit, he is a base ignoble Creature. It destroys likewise Magnanimity, and the raising of humane Nature : for take an example of a Dogg, and mark what a generosity and courage he will put on, when he finds himself maintained by a Man, who to him is instead of a God, or Melior Natura. Which courage is manifestly such, as that Creature without that confidence of a better Nature than his own, could never attain. So Man, when he resteth and assureth himself upon Divine protection and favour, gathereth a force and faith which human Nature in itself could not obtain."

LORD BACON.

In trellis'd shed with clustering roses gay,
And, Mary! oft beside our blazing fire,
When years of wedded life were as a day
Whose current answers to the heart's desire,
Did we together read in Spenser's Lay
How Una, sad of soul—in sad attire,
The gentle Una, born of heavenly birth,
To seek her Knight went wandering o'er the earth.

Ah, then, Beloved! pleasing was the smart,
And the tear precious in compassion shed
For Her, who, pierced by sorrow's thrilling dart,
Did meekly bear the pang unmerited;
Meek as that emblem of her lowly heart
The milk-white Lamb which in a line she led,—
And faithful, loyal in her innocence,
Like the brave Lion slain in her defence.

X

Notes could we hear as of a faery shell
Attuned to words with sacred wisdom fraught;
Free Fancy prized each specious miracle,
And all its finer inspiration caught;
'Till, in the bosom of our rustic Cell,
We by a lamentable change were taught
That "bliss with mortal Man may not abide:"—
How nearly joy and sorrow are allied!

For us the stream of fiction ceased to flow,
For us the voice of melody was mute.
—But, as soft gales dissolve the dreary snow
And give the timid herbage leave to shoot,
Heaven's breathing influence failed not to bestow
A timely promise of unlooked-for fruit,
Fair fruit of pleasure and serene content
From blossoms wild of fancies innocent.

It soothed us—it beguiled us—then, to hear
Once more of troubles wrought by magic spell;
And griefs whose aery motion comes not near
The pangs that tempt the Spirit to rebel;
Then, with mild Una in her sober chear,
High over hill and low adown the dell
Again we wandered, willing to partake
All that she suffered for her dear Lord's sake.

Then, too, this Song *of mine* once more could please,
Where, anguish, strange as dreams of restless sleep,
Is tempered and allayed by sympathies
Aloft ascending, and descending deep,
Even to the inferior Kinds; whom forest trees
Protect from beating sunbeams, and the sweep
Of the sharp winds;—fair Creatures!—to whom Heaven
A calm and sinless life, with love, hath given.

This tragic Story cheared us; for it speaks
Of female patience winning firm repose;
And of the recompense which conscience seeks
A bright, encouraging example shows;
Needful when o'er wide realms the tempest breaks,
Needful amid life's ordinary woes;—
Hence, not for them unfitted who would bless
A happy hour with holier happiness.

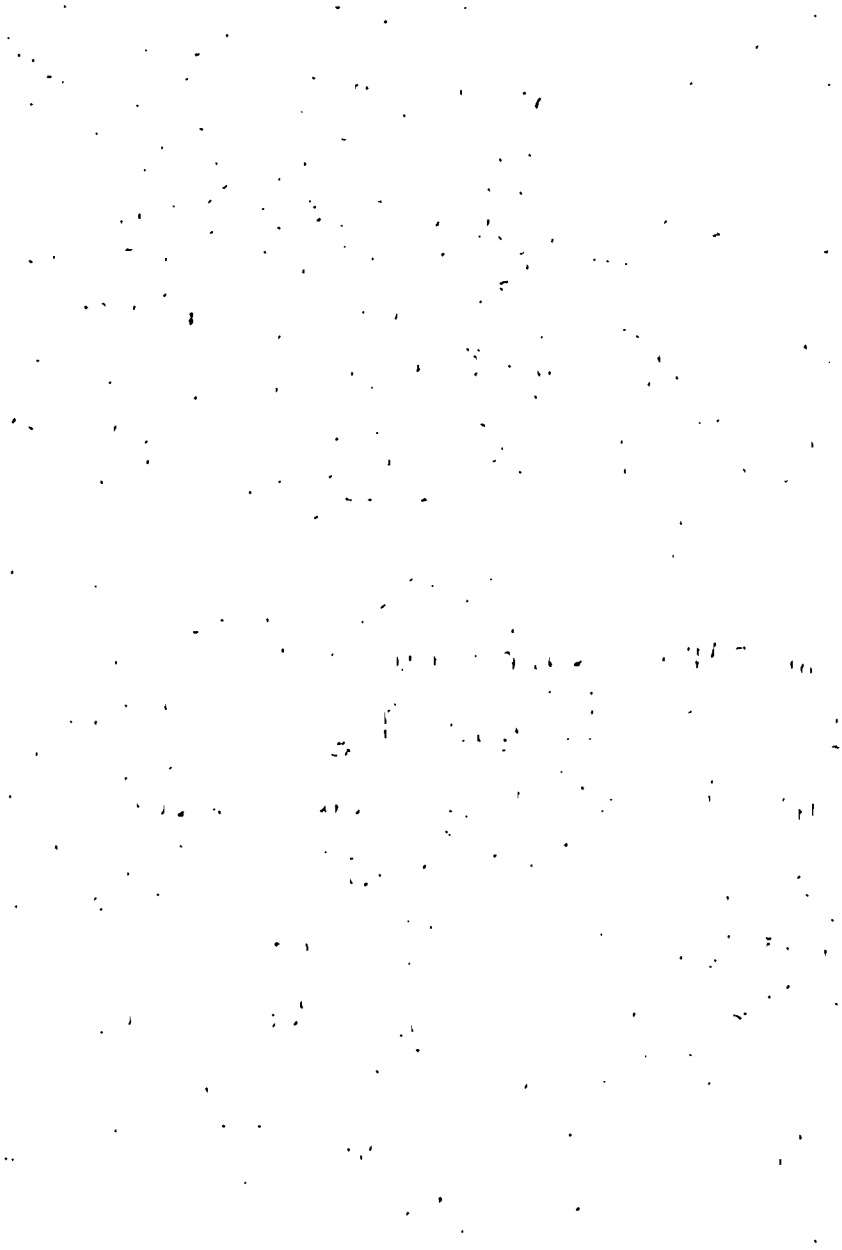
He serves the Muses erringly and ill,
Whose aim is pleasure light and fugitive:
O, that my mind were equal to fulfill
The comprehensive mandate which they give—
Vain aspiration of an earnest will!
Yet in this moral Strain a power may live,
Beloved Wife! such solace to impart
As it hath yielded to thy tender heart.

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND,
April 20, 1815.

THE

WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

CANTO FIRST.



THE

WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

CANTO FIRST.

FROM Bolton's old monastic tower
The bells ring loud with gladsome power;
The sun is bright; the fields are gay
With people in their best array
Of stole and doublet, hood and scarf,
Along the banks of the crystal Wharf,
Through the Vale retired and lowly,
Trooping to that summons holy.

And, up among the moorlands, see
What sprinklings of blithe company!
Of lasses and of shepherd grooms,
That down the steep hills force their way,
Like cattle through the budded brooms;
Path, or no path, what care they?
And thus in joyous mood they hie
To Bolton's mouldering Priory.

What would they there?—Full fifty years
That sumptuous Pile, with all its peers,
Too harshly hath been doomed to taste
The bitterness of wrong and waste:
Its courts are ravaged; but the tower
Is standing with a voice of power,
That ancient voice which wont to call
To mass or some high festival;
And in the shattered fabric's heart
Remaineth one protected part;

A rural Chapel, neatly drest,
In covert like a little nest;
And thither young and old repair,
This Sabbath-day, for praise and prayer.

Fast the church-yard fills;—anon
Look again, and they all are gone;
The cluster round the porch, and the folk
Who sate in the shade of the Prior's Oak!
And scarcely have they disappeared
Ere the prelusive hymn is heard:—
With one consent the people rejoice,
Filling the church with a lofty voice!
They sing a service which they feel:
For 'tis the sun-rise now of zeal,
And faith and hope are in their prime,
In great Eliza's golden time.

A moment ends the fervent din,
And all is hushed, without and within;

For, though the priest more tranquilly
Recites the holy liturgy,
The only voice which you can hear
Is the river murmuring near.
—When soft!—the dusky trees between,
And down the path through the open green,
Where is no living thing to be seen;
And through yon gateway, where is found,
Beneath the arch with ivy bound,
Free entrance to the church-yard ground;
And right across the verdant sod
Towards the very house of God;
—Comes gliding in with lovely gleam,
Comes gliding in serene and slow,
Soft and silent as a dream,
A solitary Doe!
White she is as lily of June,
And beauteous as the silver moon
When out of sight the clouds are driven,
And she is left alone in heaven;

Or like a ship some gentle day
In sunshine sailing far away,
A glittering ship, that hath the plain
Of ocean for her own domain.

Lie silent in your graves ye dead!
Lie quiet in your church-yard bed!
Ye living tend your holy cares,
Ye multitude pursue your prayers,
And blame not me if my heart and sight
Are occupied with one delight!
'Tis a work for sabbath hours
If I with this bright Creature go;
Whether she be of forest bowers,
From the bowers of earth below;
Or a Spirit, for one day given,
A gift of grace from purest heaven.

What harmonious pensive changes
Wait upon her as she ranges

Round and through this Pile of state,
Overthrown and desolate!
Now a step or two her way
Is through space of open day,
Where the enamoured sunny light
Brightens her that was so bright;
Now doth a delicate shadow fall,
Falls upon her like a breath,
From some lofty arch or wall,
As she passes underneath:
Now some gloomy nook partakes
Of the glory that she makes,—
High-ribbed vault of stone, or cell
With perfect cunning framed as well
Of stone, and ivy, and the spread
Of the elder's bushy head;
Some jealous and forbidding cell,
That doth the living stars repel,
And where no flower hath leave to dwell.

The presence of this wandering Doe
Fills many a damp obscure recess
With lustre of a saintly show;
And, re-appearing, she no less
To the open day gives blessedness.
But say, among these holy places,
Which thus assiduously she paces,
Comes she with a votary's task,
Rite to perform, or boon to ask?
Fair Pilgrim! harbours she a sense
Of sorrow, or of reverence?
Can she be grieved for quire or shrine,
Crushed as if by wrath divine?
For what survives of house where God
Was worshipped, or where Man abode;
For old magnificence undone;
Or for the gentler work begun
By Nature, softening and concealing,
And busy with a hand of healing,—

The altar, whence the cross was rent,
Now rich with mossy ornament,—
The dormitory's length laid bare,
Where the wild-rose blossoms fair;
And sapling ash, whose place of birth
Is that lordly chamber's hearth?
—She sees a warrior carved in stone
Among the thick weeds stretched alone;
A warrior, with his shield of pride
Cleaving humbly to his side,
And hands in resignation prest,
Palm to palm, on his tranquil breast:
Methinks she passeth by the sight,
As a common creature might:
If she be doomed to inward care,
Or service, it must lie elsewhere.
—But hers are eyes serenely bright,
And on she moves, with pace how light!
Nor spares to stoop her head, and taste
The dewy turf with flowers bestrown;

And in this way she fares, till at last
Beside the ridge of a grassy grave
In quietness she lays her down;
Gently as a weary wave
Sinks, when the summer breeze hath died,
Against an anchored vessel's side;
Even so, without distress, doth she
Lie down in peace, and lovingly.

The day is placid in its going,
To a lingering motion bound,
Like the river in its flowing;
Can there be a softer sound?
So the balmy minutes pass,
While this radiant Creature lies
Couched upon the dewy grass,
Pensively with downcast eyes.
—When now again the people rear
A voice of praise, with awful chear!

It is the last, the parting song;
And from the temple forth they throng—
And quickly spread themselves abroad—
While each pursues his several road.
But some, a variegated band
Of middle-aged, and old, and young,
And little children by the hand
Upon their leading mothers hung,
Turn, with obeisance gladly paid,
Towards the spot, where, full in view,
The lovely Doe of whitest hue,
Her sabbath couch has made.

It was a solitary mound;
Which two spears' length of level ground
Did from all other graves divide:
As if in some respect of pride;
Or melancholy's sickly mood,
Still shy of human neighbourhood;

Or guilt, that humbly would express
A penitential loneliness.

" Look, there she is, my Child! draw near;
She fears not, wherefore should we fear?
She means no harm;"—but still the Boy,
To whom the words were softly said,
Hung back, and smiled and blushed for joy,
A shame-faced blush of glowing red!
Again the Mother whispered low,
" Now you have seen the famous Doe:
From Rylstone she hath found her way
Over the hills this sabbath-day;
Her work, whate'er it be, is done,
And she will depart when we are gone;
Thus doth she keep, from year to year,
Her sabbath morning, foul or fair."

This whisper, soft repeats what he
Had known from early infancy.

Bright is the Creature—as in dreams
The Boy had seen her—yea more bright—
But is she truly what she seems?—
He asks with insecure delight,
Asks of himself—and doubts—and still
The doubt returns against his will:
Though he, and all the standers-by,
Could tell a tragic history
Of facts divulged, wherein appear
Substantial motive, reason clear,
Why thus the milk-white Doe is found
Couchant beside that lonely mound;
And why she duly loves to pace
The circuit of this hallowed place.
Nor to the Child's enquiring mind
Is such perplexity confined:
For, 'spite of sober truth, that sees
A world of fixed remembrances
Which to this mystery belong,

If, undeceived, my skill can trace
The characters of every face,
There lack not strange delusion here,
Conjecture vague, and idle fear,
And superstitious fancies strong,
Which do the gentle Creature wrong.

That bearded, staff-supported Sire,
(Who in his youth had often fed
Full cheerily on convent-bread,
And heard old tales by the convent-fire,
And lately hath brought home the scars
Gathered in long and distant wars)
That Old Man—studious to expound
The spectacle—hath mounted high
To days of dim antiquity;
When Lady Aäliza mourned
Her Son, and felt in her despair,
The pang of unavailing prayer;

Her Son in Wharf's abysses drowned,
The noble Boy of Egremound.
From which affliction, when God's grace
At length had in her heart found place,
A pious structure, fair to see,
Rose up—this stately Priory!
The Lady's work,—but now laid low;
To the grief of her soul that doth come and go,
In the beautiful form of this innocent Doe:
Which, though seemingly doomed in its breast to sustain
A softened remembrance of sorrow and pain,
Is spotless, and holy, and gentle, and bright,—
And glides o'er the earth like an angel of light.

Pass, pass who will, yon chantry door;
And, through the chink in the fractured floor
Look down, and see a griesly sight;
A vault where the bodies are buried upright!
There face by face, and hand by hand,
The Claphams and Mauleverers stand;

And, in his place, among son and sire,
Is John de Clapham, that fierce Esquire;—
A valiant man, and a name of dread,
In the ruthless wars of the White and Red;—
Who dragged Earl Pembroke from Banbury church,
And smote off his head on the stones of the porch!
Look down among them, if you dare;
Oft does the White Doe loiter there,
Prying into the darksome rent;
Nor can it be with good intent:—
So thinks that Dame of haughty air,
Who hath a Page her book to hold,
And wears a frontlet edged with gold.
Well may her thoughts be harsh; for she
Numbers among her ancestry
Earl Pembroke, slain so impiously!

That slender Youth, a scholar pale,
From Oxford come to his native vale,

He also hath his own conceit:
It is, thinks he, the gracious Fairy,
Who loved the Shepherd Lord to meet
In his wanderings solitary;
Wild notes she in his hearing sang,
A song of Nature's hidden powers;
That whistled like the wind, and rang
Among the rocks and holly bowers.
'Twas said that she all shapes could wear;
And oftentimes before him stood,
Amid the trees of some thick wood,
In semblance of a lady fair,
And taught him signs, and shewed him sights,
In Craven's dens, on Cumbria's heights;
When under cloud of fear he lay,
A shepherd clad in homely grey,
Nor left him at his later day.
And hence, when he, with spear and shield,
Rode full of years to Flodden field,

His eye could see the hidden spring,
And how the current was to flow;
The fatal end of Scotland's King,
And all that hopeless overthrow.
But not in wars did he delight,
This Clifford wished for worthier might;
Nor in broad pomp, or courtly state;
Him his own thoughts did elevate,—
Most happy in the shy recess
Of Barden's humble quietness.
And choice of studious friends had he
Of Bolton's dear fraternity;
Who, standing on this old church tower,
In many a calm propitious hour,
Perused, with him, the starry sky;—
Or in their cells with him did pry
For other lore,—through strong desire
Searching the earth with chemic fire:

But they and their good works are fled—
And all is now disquieted—
And peace is none, for living or dead!

Ah, pensive Scholar! think not so,
But look again at the radiant Doe!
What quiet watch she seems to keep,
Alone, beside that grassy heap!

Why mention other thoughts unmeet
For vision so composed and sweet?
While stand the people in a ring,
Gazing, doubting, questioning;
Yea, many overcome in spite
Of recollections clear and bright;
Which yet do unto some impart
An undisturbed repose of heart.
And all the assembly own a law
Of orderly respect and awe;

But see—they vanish, one by one,
And last, the Doe herself is gone.

Harp! we have been full long beguiled
By busy dreams, and fancies wild;
To which, with no reluctant strings,
Thou hast attuned thy murmurings;
And now before this Pile we stand
In solitude, and utter peace:
But, harp! thy murmurs may not cease,—
Thou hast breeze-like visitings;
For a Spirit with angel wings
Hath touched thee, and a Spirit's hand:
A voice is with us—a command
To chaunt, in strains of heavenly glory,
A tale of tears, a mortal story!

END OF CANTO FIRST.

THE

WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

CANTO SECOND.

THE

WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

CANTO SECOND.

The Harp in lowliness obeyed:
And first we sang of the green-wood shade,
And a solitary Maid;
Beginning, where the song must end,
With her, and with her sylvan Friend;
The friend who stood before her sight,
Her only unextinguished light,—
Her last companion in a dearth
Of love, upon a hopeless earth.

For She it was,—'twas She who wrought
Meekly, with foreboding thought,
In vermeil colours and in gold
An unblessed work; which, standing by,
Her Father did with joy behold,—
Exulting in the imagery;
A Banner, one that did fulfil
Too perfectly his headstrong will:
For on this Banner had her hand
Embroidered (such was the command)
The Sacred Cross; and figured there
The five dear wounds our Lord did bear;
Full soon to be uplifted high,
And float in rueful company!

It was the time when England's Queen
Twelve years had reigned, a sovereign dread;
Nor yet the restless crown had been
Disturbed upon her virgin head;

But now the inly-working North
Was ripe to send its thousands forth,
A potent vassalage, to fight
In Percy's and in Neville's right,—
Two earls fast leagued in discontent,
Who gave their wishes open vent;
And boldly urged a general plea,
The rites of ancient piety
To be by force of arms renewed;
Glad prospect for the multitude!
And that same Banner, on whose breast
The blameless Lady had exprest,
Memorials chosen to give life,
And sunshine to a dangerous strife;
This Banner, waiting for the call,
Stood quietly in Rylstone Hall.

It came,—and Francis Norton said,
"O Father! rise not in this fray—

The hairs are white upon your head;
Dear Father, hear me when I say
It is for you too late a day!
Bethink you of your own good name;
A just and gracious queen have we,
A pure religion, and the claim
Of peace on our humanity.
'Tis meet that I endure your scorn,—
I am your son, your eldest born;
But not for lordship or for land,
My Father, do I clasp your knees—
The Banner touch not, stay your hand,—
This multitude of men disband,
And live at home in blissful ease;
For these my brethren's sake, for me;
And, most of all, for Emily!"

Loud noise was in the crowded hall,
And scarcely could the Father hear

That name—which had a dying fall,
The name of his only Daughter dear,—
And on the banner which stood near
He glanced a look of holy pride,
And his wet eyes were glorified;
Then seized the staff, and thus did say:
"Thou, Richard, bear'st thy father's name,
Keep thou this ensign till the day
When I of thee require the same:
Thy place be on my better hand;—
And seven as true as thou, I see,
Will cleave to this good cause and me."
He spake, and eight brave sons straightway
All followed him, a gallant band!

Forth when Sire and Sons appeared
A gratulating shout was reared,
With din of arms and minstrelsy,
From all his warlike tenantry,

All horsed and harnessed with him to ride;
—A shout to which the hills replied!

But Francis, in the vacant hall,
Stood silent under dreary weight,—
A phantasm, in which roof and wall
Shook—tottered—swam before his sight,
A phantasm like a dream of night.
Thus overwhelmed, and desolate,
He found his way to a postern-gate;
And, when he waked at length, his eye
Was on the calm and silent sky;
With air about him breathing sweet,
And earth's green grass beneath his feet;
Nor did he fail ere long to hear
A sound of military chear,
Faint—but it reached that sheltered spot;
He heard, and it disturbed him not.

There stood he, leaning on a lance
Which he had grasped unknowingly,—
Had blindly grasped in that strong trance,
That dimness of heart agony;
There stood he, cleansed from the despair
And sorrow of his fruitless prayer.
The past he calmly hath reviewed:
But where will be the fortitude
Of this brave Man, when he shall see
That Form beneath the spreading tree,
And know that it is Emily?
Oh! hide them from each other, hide,
Kind Heaven, this pair severely tried!

He saw her where in open view
She sate beneath the spreading yew,—
Her head upon her lap, concealing
In solitude her bitter feeling:
How could he chuse but shrink or sigh?
He shrunk, and muttered inwardly,

" Might ever son *command* a sire,
The act were justified to-day."
This to himself—and to the Maid,
Whom now he had approached, he said,
—" Gone are they,—they have their desire;
And I with thee one hour will stay,
To give thee comfort if I may."

He paused, her silence to partake,
And long it was before he spake:
Then, all at once, his thoughts turned round,
And fervent words a passage found.

" Gone are they, bravely, though misled,
With a dear Father at their head!
The Sons obey a natural lord;
The Father had given solemn word
To noble Percy,—and a force
Still stronger bends him to his course.

This said, our tears to-day may fall
As at an innocent funeral.
In deep and awful channel runs
This sympathy of Sire and Sons;
Untried our Brothers were beloved,
And now their faithfulness is proved;
For faithful we must call them, bearing
That soul of conscientious daring.
—There were they all in circle—there
Stood Richard, Ambrose, Christopher,
John with a sword that will not fail,
And Marmaduke in fearless mail,
And those bright Twins were side by side;
And there, by fresh hopes beautified,
Was He, whose arm yet lacks the power
Of man, our youngest, fairest flower!
I, in the right of eldest born,
And in a second father's place,
Presumed to stand against their scorn,
And meet their pity face to face;

Yea, trusting in God's holy aid,
I to my Father knelt and prayed;
And one, the pensive Marmaduke,
Methought, was yielding inwardly,
And would have laid his purpose by,
But for a glance of his Father's eye,
Which I myself could scarcely brook.

Then be we, each, and all, forgiven!
Thee, chiefly thee, my Sister dear,
Whose pangs are registered in heaven,—
The stifled sigh, the hidden tear,
And smiles, that dared to take their place,
Meek filial smiles, upon thy face,
As that unhallowed Banner grew
Beneath a loving old man's view.
Thy part is done—thy painful part;
Be thou then satisfied in heart!
A further, though far easier task
Than thine hath been, my duties ask;

With their's my efforts cannot blend,
I cannot for such cause contend;
Their aims I utterly forswear;
But I in body will be there.
Unarmed and naked will I go,
Be at their side, come weal or woe:
On kind occasions I may wait,
See, hear, obstruct, or mitigate.
Bare breast I take and an empty hand."—
Therewith he threw away the lance
Which he had grasped in that strong trance,
Spurned it—like something that would stand
Between him and the pure intent
Of love on which his soul was bent.

"For thee, for thee, is left the sense
Of trial past without offence
To God or Man;—such innocence,
Such consolation, and the excess
Of an unmerited distress;

In that thy very strength must lie.
—O Sister, I could prophesy!
The time is come that rings the knell
Of all we loved, and loved so well;—
Hope nothing, if I thus may speak
To thee a woman, and thence weak;
Hope nothing, I repeat; for we
Are doomed to perish utterly:
'Tis meet that thou with me divide
The thought while I am by thy side,
Acknowledging a grace in this,
A comfort in the dark abyss:
But look not for me when I am gone,
And be no farther wrought upon.
Farewell all wishes, all debate,
All prayers for this cause, or for that!
Weep, if that aid thee; but depend
Upon no help of outward friend;
Espouse thy doom at once, and cleave
To fortitude without reprieve.

For we must fall, both we and ours,—
This Mansion and these pleasant bowers;
Walks, pools, and arbours, homestead, hall,
Our fate is theirs, will reach them all;
The young Horse must forsake his manger,
And learn to glory in a Stranger;
The Hawk forget his perch,—the Hound
Be parted from his ancient ground:
The blast will sweep us all away,
One desolation, one decay!
And even this Creature!" which words saying
He pointed to a lovely Doe,
A few steps distant, feeding, straying;
Fair Creature, and more white than snow!
"Even she will to her peaceful woods
Return, and to her murmuring floods,
And be in heart and soul the same
She was before she hither came,—
Ere she had learned to love us all,
Herself beloved in Rylstone Hall.

—But thou, my Sister, doomed to be
The last leaf which by heaven's decree
Must hang upon a blasted tree;
If not in vain we have breathed the breath
Together of a purer faith—
If hand in hand we have been led
And thou, (O happy thought this day!)
Not seldom foremost in the way—
If on one thought our minds have fed,
And we have in one meaning read—
If, when at home our private weal
Hath suffered from the shock of zeal,
Together we have learned to prize
Forbearance, and self-sacrifice—
If we like combatants have fared,
And for this issue been prepared—
If thou art beautiful, and youth
And thought endue thee with all truth—
Be strong;—be worthy of the grace
Of God, and fill thy destined place:

A soul, by force of sorrows high,
Uplifted to the purest sky
Of undisturbed humanity!"

He ended,—or she heard no more:
He led her from the Yew-tree shade,
And at the Mansion's silent door,
He kissed the consecrated Maid;
And down the Valley he pursued,
Alone, the armed Multitude.

END OF CANTO SECOND.

THE

WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

CANTO THIRD.

THE

WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

CANTO THIRD.

Now joy for you and sudden chear,
Ye Watchmen upon Brancepeth Towers;
Looking forth in doubt and fear,
Telling melancholy hours!
Proclaim it, let your Masters hear
That Norton with his Band is near!
The Watchmen from their station high
Pronounced the word,—and the Earls descry

Forthwith the armed Company
Marching down the banks of Were.

Said fearless Norton to the Pair
Gone forth to hail him on the Plain—
"This meeting, noble Lords! looks fair,
I bring with me a goodly train;
Their hearts are with you:—hill and dale
Have helped us:—Ure we crossed, and Swale,
And horse and harness followed—see
The best part of their Yeomanry!
—Stand forth, my Sons!—these eight are mine,
Whom to this service I commend;
Which way soe'er our fate incline
These will be faithful to the end;
They are my all"—voice failed him here,
"My all save one, a Daughter dear!
Whom I have left, the mildest birth,
The meekest Child on this blessed earth.

I had—but these are by my side
These eight, and this is a day of pride!
The time is ripe—with festive din
Lo! how the People are flocking in,—
Like hungry Fowl to the Feeder's hand
When snow lies heavy upon the land."

He spake bare truth; for far and near
From every side came noisy swarms
Of Peasants in their homely gear;
And, mixed with these, to Brancepeth came
Grave Gentry of estate and name,
And Captains known for worth in arms:
And prayed the Earls in self-defence
To rise, and prove their innocence.—
"Rise, noble Earls, put forth your might
For holy Church, and the People's right!"

The Norton fixed, at this demand,
His eye upon Northumberland,

And said, "The minds of Men will own
No loyal rest while England's Crown
Remains without an Heir, the bait
Of strife and factions desperate;
Who, paying deadly hate in kind
Through all things else, in this can find
A mutual hope, a common mind;
And plot, and pant to overwhelm
All ancient honour in the realm.
—Brave Earls! to whose heroic veins
Our noblest blood is given in trust,
To you a suffering State complains,
And ye must raise her from the dust.
With wishes of still bolder scope
On you we look, with dearest hope,
Even for our Altars,—for the prize
In Heaven, of life that never dies;
For the old and holy Church we mourn,
And must in joy to her return.

Behold!"—and from his Son whose stand
Was on his right, from that guardian hand
He took the Banner, and unfurled
The precious folds—" behold," said he,
" The ransom of a sinful world;
Let this your preservation be,—
The wounds of hands and feet and side,
And the sacred Cross on which Jesus died!
—This bring I from an ancient hearth,
These Records wrought in pledge of love
By hands of no ignoble birth,
A Maid o'er whom the blessed Dove
Vouchsafed in gentleness to brood
While she the holy work pursued."
" Uplift the Standard!" was the cry
From all the Listeners that stood round,
" Plant it,—by this we live or die"—
The Norton ceased not for that sound,
But said, " The prayer which ye have heard,
Much injured Earls! by these preferred,

Is offered to the Saints, the sigh
Of tens of thousands, secretly."—
" Uplift it," cried once more the Band,
And then a thoughtful pause ensued.
" Uplift it !" said Northumberland—
Whereat, from all the multitude,
Who saw the Banner reared on high
In all its dread emblazonry,
With tumult and indignant rout
A voice of uttermost joy brake out :
The transport was rolled down the river of Were,
And Durham, the time-honoured Durham, did hear,
And the Towers of Saint Cuthbert were stirred by
the shout !

Now was the North in arms :—they shine
In warlike trim from Tweed to Tyne,
At Percy's voice : and Neville sees
His Followers gathering in from Tees,

From Were, and all the little Rills
Concealed among the forked Hills.—
Seven hundred Knights, Retainers all
Of Neville, at their Master's call
Had sate together in Raby Hall!
Such strength that Earldom held of yore;
Nor wanted at this time rich store
Of well-appointed Chivalry.
—Not loth the sleepy lance to wield,
And greet the old paternal shield,
They heard the summons;—and, furthermore,
Came Foot and Horse-men of each degree,
Unbound by pledge of fealty;
Appeared, with free and open hate
Of novelties in Church and State;
Knight, Burgher, Yeoman, and Esquire;
And the Romish Priest, in Priest's attire.
And thus, in arms, a zealous Band
Proceeding under joint command,

To Durham first their course they bear;
And in Saint Cuthbert's ancient seat
Sang Mass,—and tore the book of Prayer,—
And trod the Bible beneath their feet.

Thence marching southward smooth and free,
" They mustered their Host at Wetherby,
Full sixteen thousand fair to see;"
The choicest Warriors of the North!
But none for undisputed worth
Like those eight Sons; who in a ring,
Each with a lance—erect and tall,
A falchion, and a buckler small,
Stood by their Sire, on Clifford-moor,
In youthful beauty flourishing,
To guard the Standard which he bore.
—With feet that firmly pressed the ground
They stood, and girt their Father round;
Such was his choice,—no Steed will he
Henceforth bestride;—triumphantly

He stood upon the verdant sod,
Trusting himself to the earth, and God.
Rare sight to embolden and inspire!
Proud was the field of Sons and Sire,
Of him the most; and, sooth to say,
No shape of Man in all the array
So graced the sunshine of that day:
The monumental pomp of age
Was with this goodly Personage;
A stature undepressed in size,
Unbent, which rather seemed to rise,
In open victory o'er the weight
Of seventy years, to higher height;
Magnific limbs of withered state,—
A face to fear and venerate,—
Eyes dark and strong, and on his head
Rich locks of silver hair, thick-spread,
Which a brown morion half-concealed,
Light as a hunter's of the field;

And thus, with girdle round his waist,
Whereon the Banner-staff might rest
At need, he stood, advancing high
The glittering, floating Pageantry.

Who sees him?—many see, and One
With unparticipated gaze;
Who 'mong these thousands Friend hath none,
And treads in solitary ways.
He, following wheresoe'er he might,
Hath watched the Banner from afar,
As Shepherds watch a lonely star,
Or Mariners the distant light
That guides them on a stormy night.
And now, upon a chosen plot
Of rising ground, yon heathy spot!
He takes this day his far-off stand,
With breast unmailed, unweaponed hand.
—Bold is his aspect; but his eye
Is pregnant with anxiety,

While, like a tutelary Power,
He there stands fixed, from hour to hour.
Yet sometimes, in more humble guise,
Stretched out upon the ground he lies,—
As if it were his only task
Like Herdsman in the sun to bask,
Or by his mantle's help to find
A shelter from the nipping wind:
And thus, with short oblivion blest,
His weary spirits gather rest.
Again he lifts his eyes; and lo!
The pageant glancing to and fro;
And hope is wakened by the sight
That he thence may learn, ere fall of night,
Which way the tide is doomed to flow.

To London were the Chieftains bent;
But what avails the bold intent?
A Royal army is gone forth
To quell the Rising of the North;

They march with Dudley at their head,
And in seven days' space, will to York be led!
Can such a mighty Host be raised
Thus suddenly, and brought so near?
The Earls upon each other gazed;
And Neville was opprest with fear;
For, though he bore a valiant name,
His heart was of a timid frame,
And bold if both had been, yet they
"Against so many may not stay."
And therefore will retreat to seize
A strong Hold on the banks of Tees;
There wait a favourable hour,
Until Lord Dacre with his power
From Naworth comes; and Howard's aid
Be with them—openly displayed.

While through the Host, from man to man,
A rumour of this purpose ran,

The Standard giving to the care
Of him who heretofore did bear
That charge, impatient Norton sought
The Chieftains to unfold his thought,
And thus abruptly spake,—"We yield
(And can it be?) an unfought field!
—How often hath the strength of heaven
To few triumphantly been given!
Still do our very children boast
Of mitred Thurston, what a Host
He conquered!—Saw we not the Plain,
(And flying shall behold again)
Where faith was proved?—while to battle moved
The Standard on the sacred wain,
On which the grey-haired Barons stood,
And the infant Heir of Mowbray's blood,
Beneath the saintly Ensigns three,
Their confidence and victory!

Shall Percy blush, then, for his Name?
Must Westmoreland be asked with shame
Whose were the numbers, where the loss,
In that other day of Neville's Cross?
When, as the Vision gave command,
The Prior of Durham with holy hand
Saint Cuthbert's Relic did uprear
Upon the point of a lofty spear,
And God descended in his power,
While the Monks prayed in Maiden's Bower.
Less would not at our need be due
To us, who war against the Untrue;—
The delegates of Heaven we rise,
Convoked the impious to chastise;
We, we the sanctities of old
Would re-establish and uphold."—
—The Chiefs were by his zeal confounded,
But word was given—and the trumpet sounded;

Back through the melancholy Host
Went Norton, and resumed his post.
Alas! thought he, and have I borne
This Banner raised so joyfully,
This hope of all posterity,
Thus to become at once the scorn
Of babbling winds as they go by,
A spot of shame to the sun's bright eye,
To the frail clouds a mockery!
—"Even these poor eight of mine would stem,"
Half to himself, and half to them
He spake, "would stem, or quell a force
Ten times their number, man and horse;
This by their own unaided might,
Without their Father in their sight,
Without the Cause for which they fight;
A Cause, which on a needful day
Would breed us thousands brave as they."

—So speaking, he upraised his head
Towards that Imagery once more;
But the familiar prospect shed
Despondency unfelt before:
A shock of intimations vain,
Blank fear, and superstitious pain,
Fell on him, with the sudden thought
Of her by whom the work was wrought:—
Oh wherefore was her countenance bright
With love divine and gentle light?
She did in passiveness obey,
But her Faith leaned another way.
Ill tears she wept,—I saw them fall,
I overheard her as she spake
Sad words to that mute Animal,
The White Doe, in the hawthorn brake;
She steeped, but not for Jesu's sake,
This Cross in tears:—by her, and One
Unworthier far, we are undone—

Her Brother was it who assailed
Her tender spirit and prevailed.
Her other Parent, too, whose head
In the cold grave hath long been laid,
From reason's earliest dawn beguiled
The docile, unsuspecting Child:
Far back—far back my mind must go
To reach the well-spring of this woe!—
While thus he brooded, music sweet
Was played to chear them in retreat;
But Norton lingered in the rear:
Thought followed thought—and ere the last
Of that unhappy train was past,
Before him Francis did appear.

"Now when 'tis not your aim to oppose,"
Said he, "in open field your Foes;
Now that from this decisive day
Your multitude must melt away,

An unarmed Man may come unblamed;
To ask a grace, that was not claimed
Long as your hopes were high, he now
May hither bring a fearless brow;
When his discountenance can do
No injury,—may come to you.
Though in your cause no part I bear,
Your indignation I can share;
Am grieved this backward march to see
How careless and disorderly!
I scorn your Chieftains, Men who lead,
And yet want courage at their need;
Then look at them with open eyes!
Deserve they further sacrifice?
My Father! I would help to find
A place of shelter, till the rage
Of cruel men do like the wind
Exhaust itself and sink to rest;
Be Brother now to Brother joined!
Admit me in the equipage

Of your misfortunes, that at least,
Whatever fate remains behind,
I may bear witness in my breast
To your nobility of mind!"

"Thou Enemy, my bane and blight!
Oh! bold to fight the Coward's fight
Against all good"—but why declare,
At length, the issue of this prayer?
Or how, from his depression raised,
The Father on his Son had gazed;
Suffice it that the Son gave way,
Nor strove that passion to allay,
Nor did he turn aside to prove
His Brothers' wisdom or their love—
But calmly from the spot withdrew;
The like endeavours to renew,
Should e'er a kindlier time ensue.

END OF CANTO THIRD.

THE

WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

CANTO FOURTH.

THE

WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

CANTO FOURTH.

FROM cloudless ether *looking* down,
The Moon, this tranquil evening, sees
A Camp, and a beleaguered Town,
And Castle like a stately crown
On the steep rocks of winding Tees;—
And, southward far, with moors between,
Hill-tops, and floods, and forests green,
The bright Moon sees that valley small
Where Rylstone's old sequestered Hall

A venerable image yields
Of quiet to the neighbouring fields;
While from one pillared chimney breathes
The silver smoke, and mounts in wreaths.
—The courts are hushed;—for timely sleep
The Grey-hounds to their kennel creep;
The Peacock in the broad ash-tree
Aloft is roosted for the night,
He who in proud prosperity
Of colours manifold and bright
Walked round, affronting the day-light;
And higher still, above the bower
Where he is perched, from yon lone Tower
The Hall-clock in the clear moon-shine
With glittering finger points at nine.
—Ah! who could think that sadness here
Had any sway? or pain, or fear?
A soft and lulling sound is heard
Of streams inaudible by day;

The garden pool's dark surface—stirred
By the night insects in their play—
Breaks into dimples small and bright;
A thousand, thousand rings of light
That shape themselves and disappear
Almost as soon as seen:—and, *lo!*
Not distant far, the milk-white Doe:
The same fair Creature which was nigh
Feeding in tranquillity,
When Francis uttered to the Maid
His last words in the yew-tree shade;—
The same fair Creature, who hath found
Her way into forbidden ground;
Where now, within this spacious plot
For pleasure made, a goodly spot,
With lawns, and beds of flowers, and shades
Of trellis-work in long arcades,
And cirque and crescent framed by wall
Of close-clipt foliage green and tall,

Converging walks, and fountains gay,
And terraces in trim array,—
Beneath yon cypress spiring high,
With pine and cedar spreading wide
Their darksome boughs on either side,
In open moonlight doth she lie;
Happy as others of her kind,
That, far from human neighbourhood,
Range—unrestricted as the wind—
Through park, or chase, or savage wood.

But where at this still hour is she,
The consecrated Emily?
Even while I speak, behold the Maid
Emerging from the cedar shade
To open moonshine, where the Doe
Beneath the cypress-spire is laid;
Like a patch of April snow,
Upon a bed of herbage green,
Lingering in a woody glade,

Or behind a rocky screen;
Lonely relic! which, if seen
By the Shepherd, is passed by
With an inattentive eye.
—Nor more regard doth she bestow
Upon the uncomplaining Doe!

Yet the meek Creature was not free,
Erewhile, from some perplexity:
For thrice hath she approached, this day,
The thought-bewildered Emily;
Endeavouring, in her gentle way,
Some smile or look of love to gain,—
Encouragement to sport or play;
Attempts which by the unhappy Maid
Have all been slighted or gainsaid.
—O welcome to the viewless breeze!
'Tis fraught with acceptable feeling,
And instantaneous sympathies
Into the Sufferer's bosom stealing;—

Ere she hath reached yon rustic Shed
Hung with late-flowering woodbine spread
Along the walls and overhead,
The fragrance of the breathing flowers
Revives a memory of those hours
When here, in this remote Alcove,
(While from the pendant woodbine came
Like odours, sweet as if the same)
A fondly anxious Mother strove
To teach her salutary fears
And mysteries above her years.
—Yes, she is soothed:—an Image faint—
And yet not faint—a presence bright
Returns to her;—'tis that bless'd Saint
Who with mild looks and language mild
Instructed here her darling Child,
While yet a prattler on the knee,
To worship in simplicity
The invisible God, and take for guide
The faith reformed and purified.

'Tis flown—the Vision, and the sense
Of that beguiling influence!
"But oh! thou Angel from above,
Thou Spirit of maternal love,
That stood'st before my eyes, more clear
Than Ghosts are fabled to appear
Sent upon embassies of fear;
As thou thy presence hast to me
Vouchsafed—in radiant ministry
Descend on Francis:—through the air
Of this sad earth to him repair,
Speak to him with a voice, and say,
"That he must cast despair away!"

Then from within the embowered retreat
Where she had found a grateful seat
Perturbed she issues.—She will go;
Herself will follow to the war,
And clasp her Father's knees;—ah, no!

She meets the insuperable bar,
The injunction by her Brother laid;
His parting charge—but ill obeyed!
That interdicted all debate,
All prayer for this cause or for that;
All efforts that would turn aside
The headstrong current of their fate:
Her duty is to stand and wait;
In resignation to abide
The shock, and finally secure
O'er pain and grief a triumph pure.
—She knows, she feels it, and is cheared;
At least her present pangs are checked.
—And now an ancient Man appeared,
Approaching her with grave respect.
Down the smooth walk which then she trod
He paced along the silent sod,
And greeting her thus gently spake,
"An old Man's privilege I take;

Dark is the time—a woeful day!
Dear daughter of affliction, say
How can I serve you? point the way."

"Rights have you, and may well be bold:
You with my Father have grown old
In friendship;—go—from him—from me—
Strive to avert this misery.
This would I beg; but on my mind
A passive stillness is enjoined.
—If prudence offer help or aid,
On *you* is no restriction laid;
You not forbidden to recline
With hope upon the Will Divine."

"Hope," said the Sufferer's zealous Friend,
"Must not forsake us till the end.—
In Craven's wilds is many a den,
To shelter persecuted Men:

Far underground is many a cave,
Where they might lie as in the grave,
Until this storm hath ceased to rave;
Or let them cross the River Tweed,
And be at once from peril freed!"

—"Ah tempt me not!" she faintly sighed;
"I will not counsel nor exhort,—
With my condition satisfied;
But you, at least, may make report
Of what befalls;—be this your task—
This may be done;—'tis all I ask!"

She spake—and from the Lady's sight
The Sire, unconscious of his age,
Departed promptly as a Page
Bound on some errand of delight.
—The noble Francis—wise as brave,
Thought he, may have the skill to save:

With hopes in tenderness concealed,
Unarmed he followed to the field.
Him will I seek: the insurgent Powers
Are now besieging Barnard's Towers,—
"Grant that the Moon which shines this night
May guide them in a prudent flight!"

But quick the turns of chance and change,
And knowledge has a narrow range;
Whence idle fears, and needless pain,
And wishes blind, and efforts vain.—
Their flight the fair Moon may not see;
For, from mid-heaven, already she
Hath witnessed their captivity.
She saw the desperate assault
Upon that hostile Castle made;—
But dark and dismal is the Vault
Where Norton and his Sons are laid!
Disastrous issue!—He had said

"This night yon haughty Towers must yield,
Or we for ever quit the field.
—Neville is utterly dismayed,
For promise fails of Howard's aid;
And Dacre to our call replies
That he is unprepared to rise.
My heart is sick;—this weary pause
Must needs be fatal to the cause.
The breach is open—on the Wall,
This night, the Banner shall be planted!"
—'Twas done:—his Sons were with him—all;—
They belt him round with hearts undaunted;
And others follow—Sire and Son
Leap down into the court—"'Tis won"—
They shout aloud—but Heaven decreed
Another close
To that brave deed
Which struck with terror friends and foes!
The friend shrinks back—the foe recoils
From Norton and his filial band;

But they, now caught within the toils,
Against a thousand cannot stand;—
The foe from numbers courage drew,
And overpowered that gallant few.
"A rescue for the Standard!" cried
The Father from within the walls;
But, see, the sacred Standard falls!—
Confusion through the Camp spreads wide:
Some fled—and some their fears detained;
But ere the Moon had sunk to rest
In her pale chambers of the West,
Of that rash levy nought remained.

END OF CANTO FOURTH.

THE

WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

CANTO FIFTH.

THE

WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

CANTO FIFTH.

HIGH on a point of rugged ground,
Among the wastes of Rylstone Fell,
Above the loftiest ridge or mound
Where Foresters or Shepherds dwell,
An Edifice of warlike frame
Stands single (Norton Tower its name,)
It fronts all quarters, and looks round
O'er path and road, and plain and dell,
Dark moor, and gleam of pool and stream,
Upon a prospect without bound.

The summit of this bold ascent,
Though bleak and bare, and as seldom free
As Pendle-hill or Pennygent
From wind, or frost, or vapours wet,
Had often heard the sound of glee
When there the youthful Nortons met,
To practise games and archery:
How proud and happy they! the crowd
Of Lookers-on how pleased and proud!
And from the heat of the noon-tide sun,
From showers, or when the prize was won,
They to the Watch-tower did repair,
Commodious Pleasure-house! and there
Would mirth run round, with generous fare;
And the stern old Lord of Rylstone-hall,
He was the proudest of them all!

But now, his Child, with anguish pale,
Upon the height walks to and fro;

'Tis well that she hath heard the tale,—
Received the bitterness of woe:
Dead are they, they were doomed to die;
The Sons and Father all are dead,
All dead save One; and Emily
No more shall seek this Watch-tower high,
To look far forth with anxious eye,—
She is relieved from hope and dread,
Though suffering in extremity.

For she had hoped, had hoped and feared,
Such rights did feeble nature claim;
And oft her steps had hither steered,
Though not unconscious of self-blame;
For she her Brother's charge revered,
His farewell words; and by the same,
Yea by her Brother's very name,
Had, in her solitude, been cheared.

She turned to him, who with his eye
Was watching her while on the height
She sate, or wandered restlessly,
O'erburdened by her sorrow's weight;
To him who this dire news had told,
And now beside the Mourner stood;
(That grey-haired Man of gentle blood,
Who with her Father had grown old
In friendship, rival Hunters they,
And fellow Warriors in their day)
To Rylstone he the tidings brought;
Then on this place the Maid had sought:
And told, as gently as could be,
The end of that sad Tragedy,
Which it had been his lot to see.

To him the Lady turned; "You said
That Francis lives, *he* is not dead?"

" Your noble Brother hath been spared,
To take his life they have not dared.
On him and on his high endeavour
The light of praise shall shine for ever!
Nor did he (such heaven's will) in vain
His solitary course maintain;
Not vainly struggled in the might
Of duty seeing with clear sight;
He was their comfort to the last,
Their joy till every pang was past.

" I witnessed when to York they came—
What, Lady, if their feet were tied!
They might deserve a good Man's blame;
But, marks of infamy and shame,
These were their triumph, these their pride.
" Lo Francis comes," the people cried,
" A Prisoner once, but now set free!
" 'Tis well, for he the worst defied
" For sake of natural Piety;

" He rose not in this quarrel, he
" His Father and his Brothers wooed,
" Both for their own and Country's good,
" To rest in peace—he did divide,
" He parted from them; but at their side
" Now walks in unanimity—
" Then peace to cruelty and scorn,
" While to the prison they are borne,
" Peace, peace to all indignity !"

" And so in Prison were they laid—
Oh hear me, hear me, gentle Maid !
For I am come with power to bless,
To scatter gleams through your distress
Of a redeeming happiness.
Me did a reverend pity move
And privilege of ancient love,
But most, compassion for your fate,
Lady ! for your forlorn estate,

Me did these move, and I made bold,
And entrance gained to that strong-hold.

"Your Father gave me cordial greeting;
But to his purposes, that burned
Within him, instantly returned—
He was commanding and entreating,
And said, "We need not stop, my Son!
"But I will end what is begun;
"'Tis matter which I do not fear
"To entrust to any living ear."
And so to Francis he renewed
His words, more calmly thus pursued.

"Might this our enterprize have sped,
"Change wide and deep the Land had seen,
"A renovation from the dead,
"A spring-tide of immortal green:
"The darksome Altars would have blazed

" Like stars when clouds are rolled away;
" Salvation to all eyes that gazed,
" Once more the Rood had been upraised
" To spread its arms, and stand for aye.
" Then, then, had I survived to see
" New life in Bolton Priory;
" The voice restored, the eye of truth
" Re-opened that inspired my youth;
" Had seen her in her pomp arrayed;
" This Banner (for such vow I made)
" Should on the consecrated breast
" Of that same Temple have found rest:
" I would myself have hung it high,
" Glad offering of glad victory!

" A shadow of such thought remains
" To chear this sad and pensive time;
" A solemn fancy yet sustains
" One feeble Being—bids me climb

"Even to the last—one effort more
"To attest my Faith, if not restore.

"Hear then," said he, "while I impart,
"My Son, the last wish of my heart.
—"The Banner strive thou to regain;
"And, if the endeavour be not vain,
"Bear it—to whom if not to thee
"Shall I this lonely thought consign?—
"Bear it to Bolton Priory,
"And lay it on Saint Mary's shrine,—
"To wither in the sun and breeze
"Mid those decaying Sanctities.
"There let at least the gift be laid,
"The testimony there displayed;
"Bold proof that with no selfish aim,
"But for lost Faith and Christ's dear name,
"I helmeted a brow though white,
"And took a place in all men's sight;

" Yea offered up this beauteous Brood,
" This fair unrivalled Brotherhood,
" And turned away from thee, my Son!
" And left—but be the rest unsaid,
" The name untouched, the tear unshed,—
" My wish is known and I have done:
" Now promise, grant this one request,
" This dying prayer, and be thou blest!"

" Then Francis answered fervently,
" If God so will, the same shall be."

" Immediately, this solemn word
Thus scarcely given, a noise was heard,
And Officers appeared in state
To lead the Prisoners to their fate.
They rose, oh! wherefore should I fear
To tell, or, Lady, you to hear?
They rose—embraces none were given—
They stood like trees when earth and heaven

Are calm; they knew each other's worth,
And reverently the Band went forth.
They met, when they had reached the door,
The Banner which a Soldier bore,
One marshalled thus with base intent
That he in scorn might go before,
And, holding up this monument,
Conduct them to their punishment;
So cruel Sussex, unrestrained
By human feeling, had ordained:
The unhappy Banner Francis saw,
And, with a look of calm command
Inspiring universal awe,
He took it from the Soldier's hand;
And all the People that were round
Confirmed the deed in peace profound.
—High transport did the Father shed
Upon his Son—and they were led,
Led on, and yielded up their breath,
Together died, a happy death!

But Francis, soon as he had braved
This insult, and the Banner saved,
That moment, from among the tide
Of the spectators occupied
In admiration or dismay,
Bore unobserved his Charge away."

These things, which thus had in the sight
And hearing passed of Him who stood
With Emily, on the Watch-tower height,
In Rylstone's woeful neighbourhood,
He told; and oftentimes with voice
Of power to encourage or rejoice;
For deepest sorrows that aspire,
Go high, no transport ever higher.
" Yet, yet in this affliction," said
The old Man to the silent Maid,
" Yet, Lady! heaven is good—the night
Shews yet a Star which is most bright;

Your Brother lives—he lives—is come
Perhaps already to his home;
Then let us leave this dreary place."
She yielded, and with gentle pace,
Though without one uplifted look,
To Rylstone-hall her way she took.—

END OF CANTO FIFTH.

THE

WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

CANTO SIXTH.

THE

WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

CANTO SIXTH.

WHY comes not Francis?—Joyful chear
In that parental gratulation,
And glow of righteous indignation,
Went with him from the doleful City:—
He fled—yet in his flight could hear
The death-sound of the Minster-bell;
That sullen stroke pronounced farewell
To Marmaduke, cut off from pity!
To Ambrose that! and then a knell

For him, the sweet half-opened Flower!
For all—all dying in one hour!
—Why comes not Francis? Thoughts of love
Should bear him to his Sister dear
With motion fleet as winged Dove;
Yea, like a heavenly Messenger,
An Angel-guest, should he appear.
Why comes he not?—for westward fast
Along the plain of York he past;
The Banner-staff was in his hand,
The Imagery concealed from sight,
And cross the expanse, in open flight,
Reckless of what impels or leads,
Unchecked he hurries on;—nor heeds
The sorrow of the Villages;
From the triumphant cruelties
Of vengeful military force,
And punishment without remorse,
Unchecked he journies—under law
Of inward occupation strong;

And the first object which he saw,
With conscious sight, as he swept along,—
It was the Banner in his hand!
He felt, and made a sudden stand.

He looked about like one betrayed:
What hath he done? what promise made?
Oh weak, weak moment! to what end
Can such a vain oblation tend,
And he the Bearer?—Can he go
Carrying this Instrument of woe,
And find, find any where, a right
To excuse him in his Country's sight?
No, will not all Men deem the change
A downward course, perverse and strange?
Here is it,—but how, when? must she,
The unoffending Emily,
Again this piteous object see?

Such conflict long did he maintain
Within himself, and found no rest;
Calm liberty he could not gain;
And yet the service was unblest.
His own life into danger brought
By this sad burden—even that thought
Raised self-suspicion which was strong,
Swaying the brave Man to his wrong:
And how, unless it were the sense
Of all-disposing Providence,
Its will intelligibly shewn,
Finds he the Banner in his hand,
Without a thought to such intent,
Or conscious effort of his own?
And no obstruction to prevent
His Father's wish and last command!
And, thus beset, he heaved a sigh;
Remembering his own prophecy
Of utter desolation, made
To Emily in the yew-tree shade:

He sighed, submitting to the power,
The might of that prophetic hour.
" No choice is left, the deed is mine—
Dead are they, dead!—and I will go,
And, for their sakes, come weal or woe,
Will lay the Relic on the shrine."

So forward with a steady will
He went, and traversed plain and hill;
And up the vale of Wharf his way
Pursued;—and, on the second day,
He reached a summit whence his eyes
Could see the Tower of Bolton rise.
There Francis for a moment's space
Made halt—but hark! a noise behind
Of Horsemen at an eager pace!
He heard and with misgiving mind.
—'Tis Sir George Bowes who leads the Band:
They come, by cruel Sussex sent;

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Who, when the Nortons from the hand
Of Death had drunk their punishment,
Bethought him, angry and ashamed,
How Francis had the Banner claimed,
And with that charge had disappeared;
By all the Standers-by revered.
His whole bold carriage (which had quelled
Thus far the Opposer, and repelled
All censure,—enterprise so bright
That even bad Men had vainly striven
Against that overcoming light)
Was then reviewed, and prompt word given,
That to what place soever fled
He should be seized, alive or dead.

The troop of horse have gained the height
Where Francis stood in open sight.
They hem him round—"Behold the proof,
Behold the Ensign in his hand!

He did not arm, he walked aloof!
For why?—to save his Father's Land;—
Worst Traitor of them all is he,
A Traitor dark and cowardly!"

"I am no Traitor," Francis said,
"Though this unhappy freight I bear;
It weakens me, my heart hath bled
Till it is weak—but you beware,
Nor do a suffering Spirit wrong,
Whose self-reproaches are too strong!"
At this he from the beaten road
Retreated towards a brake of thorn,
Which like a place of 'vantage shewed;
And there stood bravely, though forlorn.
In self-defence with a Warrior's brow
He stood,—nor weaponless was now;
He from a Soldier's hand had snatched
A spear,—and with his eyes he watched

Their motions, turning round and round:—
His weaker hand the Banner held;
And straight by savage zeal impelled
Forth rushed a Pikeman, as if he,
Not without harsh indignity,
Would seize the same:—instinctively—
To smite the Offender—with his lance
Did Francis from the brake advance;
But, from behind, a treacherous wound
Unfeeling, brought him to the ground,
A mortal stroke:—oh, grief to tell!
Thus, thus, the noble Francis fell:
There did he lie of breath forsaken;
The Banner from his grasp was taken,
And borne exultingly away;
And the Body was left on the ground where it lay.

Two days, as many nights, he slept
Alone, unnoticed, and unwept;

For at that time distress and fear
Possessed the Country far and near;
The third day, One, who chanced to pass,
Beheld him stretched upon the grass.
A gentle Forester was he,
And of the Norton Tenantry;
And he had heard that by a Train
Of Horsemen Francis had been slain.
Much was he troubled—for the Man
Hath recognized his pallid face;
And to the nearest Huts he ran,
And called the People to the place.
—How desolate is Rylstone-hall!
Such was the instant thought of all;
And if the lonely Lady there
Should be, this sight she cannot bear!
Such thought the Forester express'd,
And all were swayed, and deemed it best
That, if the Priest should yield assent
And join himself to their intent,

Then, they, for Christian pity's sake,
In holy ground a grave would make;
That straightway buried he should be
In the Church-yard of the Priory.

Apart, some little space, was made
The grave where Francis must be laid.
In no confusion or neglect
This did they,—but in pure respect
That he was born of gentle Blood;
And that there was no neighbourhood
Of kindred for him in that ground:
So to the Church-yard they are bound,
Bearing the Body on a bier
In decency and humble chear;
And psalms are sung with holy sound.

But Emily hath raised her head,
And is again disquieted;

She must behold !—so many gone,
Where is the solitary One ?
And forth from Rylstone-hall stepped she,—
To seek her Brother forth she went
And tremblingly her course she bent
Tow'rds Bolton's ruined Priory.
She comes, and in the Vale hath heard
The Funeral dirge ;—she sees the Knot
Of people, sees them in one spot—
And darting like a wounded Bird
She reached the grave, and with her breast
Upon the ground received the rest,—
The consummation, the whole ruth
And sorrow of this final truth !

END OF CANTO SIXTH.

THE

WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

CANTO SEVENTH.

THE

WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

CANTO SEVENTH.

THOU Spirit, whose angelic hand
Was to the Harp a strong command,
Called the submissive strings to wake
In glory for this Maiden's sake,
Say, Spirit! whither hath she fled
To hide her poor afflicted head?
What mighty forest in its gloom
Enfolds her?—is a rifted tomb

Within the wilderness her seat?
Some island which the wild waves beat,
Is that the Sufferer's last retreat?
Or some aspiring rock, that shrouds
Its perilous front in mists and clouds?
High-climbing rock—deep sunless dale—
Sea—desart—what do these avail?
Oh take her anguish and her fears
Into a calm recess of years!

'Tis done;—despoil and desolation
O'er Rylstone's fair domain have blown;
The walks and pools neglect hath sown
With weeds, the bowers are overthrown,
Or have given way to slow mutation,
While, in their ancient habitation
The Norton name hath been unknown:
The lordly Mansion of its pride
Is stripped; the ravage hath spread wide

Through park and field, a perishing
That mocks the gladness of the Spring!
And with this silent gloom agreeing
There is a joyless human Being,
Of aspect such as if the waste
Were under her dominion placed:
Upon a primrose bank, her throne
Of quietness, she sits alone;
There seated, may this Maid be seen,
Among the ruins of a wood,
Erewhile a covert bright and green,
And where full many a brave Tree stood;
That used to spread its boughs, and ring
With the sweet Bird's carolling.
Behold her, like a Virgin Queen,
Neglecting in imperial state
These outward images of fate,
And carrying inward a serene
And perfect sway, through many a thought
Of chance and change, that hath been brought

To the subjection of a holy,
Though stern and rigorous, melancholy!
The like authority, with grace
Of awfulness, is in her face,—
There hath she fixed it; yet it seems
To o'ershadow by no native right
That face, which cannot lose the gleams,
Lose utterly the tender gleams
Of gentleness and meek delight
And loving-kindness ever bright:
Such is her sovereign mien;—her dress
(A vest, with woollen cincture tied,
A hood of mountain-wool undyed)
Is homely,—fashioned to express
A wandering Pilgrim's humbleness.

And she *hath* wandered, long and far,
Beneath the light of sun and star;
Hath roamed in trouble and in grief,
Driven forward like a withered leaf,

Yea like a Ship at random blown
To distant places and unknown.
But now she dares to seek a haven
Among her native wilds of Craven;
Hath seen again her Father's Roof,
And put her fortitude to proof;
The mighty sorrow has been borne,
And she is thoroughly forlorn:
Her soul doth in itself stand fast,
Sustained by memory of the past
And strength of Reason; held above
The infirmities of mortal love;
Undaunted, lofty, calm, and stable,
And awfully impenetrable.

And so—beneath a mouldered tree,
A self-surviving leafless Oak,
By unregarded age from stroke
Of ravage saved—sate Emily.

There did she rest, with head reclined,
Herself most like a stately Flower,
(Such have I seen) whom chance of birth
Hath separated from its kind,
To live and die in a shady bower,
Single on the gladsome earth.

When, with a noise like distant thunder,
A troop of Deer came sweeping by;
And, suddenly, behold a wonder!
For, of that band of rushing Deer,
A single One in mid career
Hath stopped, and fixed its large full eye
Upon the Lady Emily,
A Doe most beautiful, clear-white,
A radiant Creature, silver-bright!

Thus checked, a little while it stayed;
A little thoughtful pause it made;

And then advanced with stealth-like pace,
Drew softly near her—and more near,
Stopped once again;—but, as no trace
Was found of any thing to fear,
Even to her feet the Creature came,
And laid its head upon her knee,
And looked into the Lady's face,
A look of pure benignity,
And fond unclouded memory.
It is, thought Emily, the same,
The very Doe of other years!
The pleading look the Lady viewed,
And, by her gushing thoughts subdued,
She melted into tears—
A flood of tears, that flowed apace
Upon the happy Creature's face.

Oh, moment ever blest! O Pair!
Beloved of heaven, heaven's choicest care!

This was for you a precious greeting,—
For both a bounteous, fruitful meeting.
Joined are they, and the sylvan Doe
Can she depart? can she forego
The Lady, once her playful Peer,
And now her sainted Mistress dear?
And will not Emily receive
This lovely Chronicler of things
Long past, delights and sorrowings?
Lone Sufferer! will not she believe
The promise in that speaking face,
And take this gift of Heaven with grace?

That day, the first of a re-union
Which was to teem with high communion
That day of balmy April weather,
They tarried in the wood together.
And when, ere fall of evening-dew
She from this sylvan haunt withdrew,

The White Doe tracked with faithful pace
The Lady to her Dwelling-place;
That nook where, on paternal ground,
A habitation she had found,
The Master of whose humble board
Once owned her Father for his Lord;
A Hut, by tufted Trees defended,
Where Rylstone Brook with Wharf is blended.

When Emily by morning light
Went forth, the Doe was there in sight.
She shrunk:—with one frail shock of pain,
Received and followed by a prayer,
Did she behold—saw once again;
Shun will she not; she feels, will bear;—
But wheresoever she looked round
All now was trouble-haunted ground.
So doth the Sufferer deem it good
Even once again this neighbourhood

To leave.—Unwooed, yet unforbidden,
The White Doe followed up the Vale,
Up to another Cottage—hidden
In the deep fork of Amerdale;
And there may Emily restore
Herself, in spots unseen before.—
Why tell of mossy rock, or tree,
By lurking Dernbrook's pathless side,
Haunts of a strengthening amity
That calmed her, cheared, and fortified?
For she hath ventured now to read
Of time, and place, and thought, and deed,
Endless history that lies
In her silent Follower's eyes!
Who with a power like human Reason
Discerns the favourable season,
Skilled to approach or to retire,—
From looks conceiving her desire,
From look, deportment, voice or mien,
That vary to the heart within.

If she too passionately writhed
Her arms, or over-deeply breathed,
Walked quick or slowly, every mood
In its degree was understood;
Then well may their accord be true,
And kindly intercourse ensue.
—Oh! surely 'twas a gentle rouzing
When she by sudden glimpse espied
The White Doe on the mountain browzing,
Or in the meadow wandered wide!
How pleased, when down the Straggler sank
Beside her, on some sunny bank!
How soothed, when in thick bower enclosed,
They like a nested Pair reposed!
Fair Vision! when it crossed the Maid
Within some rocky cavern laid,
The dark cave's portal gliding by,
White as the whitest cloud on high,
Floating through the azure sky.

—What now is left for pain or fear?
That Presence, dearer and more dear,
Did now a very gladness yield:
At morning to the dewy field,
While they side by side were straying,
And the Shepherd's pipe was playing;
And with a deeper peace endued
The hour of moonlight solitude.

With her Companion, in such frame
Of mind, to Rylstone back she came,—
And, wandering through the wasted groves,
Received the memory of old Loves,
Undisturbed and undistrest,
Into a soul which now was blest
With a soft spring-day of holy;
Mild, delicious melancholy:
Not sunless gloom or unenlightened,
But by tender fancies brightened.

When the Bells of Rylstone played
Their Sabbath music—"God us ayde!"
That was the sound they seemed to speak;
Inscriptive legend, which I ween
May on those holy Bells be seen,
That legend and her Grandsire's name;
And oftentimes the Lady meek
Had in her Childhood read the same,
Words which she slighted at that day;
But now, when such sad change was wrought,
And of that lonely name she thought,
The Bells of Rylstone seemed to say,
While she sate listening in the shade,
With vocal music, "God us ayde!"
And all the Hills were glad to bear
Their part in this effectual prayer.

Nor lacked she Reason's firmest power;
But with the White Doe at her side

Up doth she climb to Norton Tower,
And thence looks round her far and wide.
Her fate there measures,—all is stilled,—
The feeble hath subdued her heart;
Behold the prophecy fulfilled,
Fulfilled, and she sustains her part!
But here her Brother's words have failed,—
Here hath a milder doom prevailed;
That she, of him and all bereft,
Hath yet this faithful Partner left,—
This single Creature that disproves
His words, remains for her, and loves.
If tears are shed, they do not fall
For loss of him, for one or all;
Yet, sometimes, sometimes doth she weep
Moved gently in her soul's soft sleep;
A few tears down her cheek descend
For this her last and living Friend.

Bless, tender Hearts, their mutual lot,
And bless for both this savage spot!
Which Emily doth sacred hold
For reasons dear and manifold—
Here hath she, here before her sight,
Close to the summit of this height,
The grassy rock-encircled Pound
In which the Creature first was found.
So beautiful the spotless Thrall,
(A lovely Youngling white as foam,)
That it was brought to Rylstone-hall;
Her youngest Brother led it home,
The youngest, then a lusty Boy,
Brought home the prize—and with what joy!

But most to Bolton's sacred Pile,
On favouring nights, she loved to go:
There ranged through cloister, court, and aisle,
Attended by the soft-paced Doe;

Nor did she fear in the still moonshine
To look upon Saint Mary's shrine;
Nor on the lonely turf that showed
Where Francis slept in his last abode.
For that she came; there oft and long
She sate in meditation strong:
And, when she from the abyss returned
Of thought, she neither shrunk nor mourned;
Was happy that she lived to greet
Her mute Companion as it lay
In love and pity at her feet;
How happy in her turn to meet
That recognition! the mild glance
Beamed from that gracious countenance;—
Communication, like the ray
Of a new morning, to the nature
And prospects of the inferior Creature!

A mortal Song we frame, by dower
Encouraged of celestial power;

Power which the viewless Spirit shed
By whom we were first visited;
Whose voice we heard, whose hand and wings
Swept like a breeze the conscious strings,
When, left in solitude, erewhile
We stood before this ruined Pile,
And, quitting unsubstantial dreams,
Sang in this Presence kindred themes;
Distress and desolation spread
Through human hearts, and pleasure dead,—
Dead—but to live again on Earth,
A second and yet nobler birth;
Dire overthrow, and yet how high
The re-ascent in sanctity!
From fair to fairer; day by day
A more divine and loftier way!
Even such this blessed Pilgrim trod,
By sorrow lifted tow'rds her God;
Uplifted to the purest sky
Of undisturbed mortality.

Her own thoughts loved she; and could bend
A dear look to her lowly Friend,—
There stopped;—her thirst was satisfied
With what this innocent spring supplied—
Her sanction inwardly she bore,
And stood apart from human cares:
But to the world returned no more,
Although with no unwilling mind
Help did she give at need, and joined
The Wharfdale Peasants in their prayers.
At length, thus faintly, faintly tied
To earth, she was set free, and died.
Thy soul, exalted Emily,
Maid of the blasted Family,
Rose to the God from whom it came!
—In Rylstone Church her mortal frame
Was buried by her Mother's side.

Most glorious sunset!—and a ray
Survives—the twilight of this day;

In that fair Creature whom the fields
Support, and whom the forest shields;
Who, having filled a holy place,
Partakes in her degree heaven's grace;
And bears a memory and a mind
Raised far above the law of kind;
Haunting the spots with lonely chear
Which her dear Mistress once held dear
Loves most what Emily loved most—
The enclosure of this Church-yard ground;
Here wanders like a gliding Ghost,
And every Sabbath here is found;
Comes with the People when the Bells
Are heard among the moorland dells,
Finds entrance through yon arch, where way
Lies open on the Sabbath-day;
Here walks amid the mournful waste
Of prostrate altars, shrines defaced,
And floors encumbered with rich show
Of fret-work imagery laid low;

Paces softly, or makes halt,
By fractured cell, or tomb, or vault,
By plate of monumental brass
Dim-gleaming among weeds and grass,
And sculptured Forms of Warriors brave;
But chiefly by that single grave,
That one sequestered hillock green,
The pensive Visitant is seen.
There doth the gentle Creature lie
With those adversities unmoved;
Calm Spectacle, by earth and sky
In their benignity approved!
And aye, methinks, this hoary Pile,
Subdued by outrage and decay,
Looks down upon her with a smile,
A gracious smile, that seems to say,
"Thou, thou art not a Child of Time,
But Daughter of the Eternal Prime!"

END OF THE WHITE DOE.

THE

FORCE OF PRAYER;

OR

THE FOUNDING OF BOLTON PRIORY.

THE

FORCE OF PRAYER;

OR

THE FOUNDING OF BOLTON PRIORY.

A TRADITION.

What is good for a bootless bene?
With these dark words begins my Tale,
And their meaning is, whence can comfort spring
When prayer is of no avail?

What is good for a bootless bene?
The Falconer to the Lady said;
And she made answer, "ENDLESS SORROW:"
For she knew that her Son was dead.

She knew it from the Falconer's words,
And from the look of the Falconer's eye,
And from the love which was in her soul
For her youthful Romilly.

—Young Romilly through Barden Woods
Is ranging high and low;
And holds a Greyhound in a leash
To let slip upon buck or doe;

And the Pair have reached that fearful chasm,
How tempting to bestride!
For lordly Wharf is there pent in
With rocks on either side.

This Striding-place is called THE STRID,
A name which it took of yore:
A thousand years hath it borne that name,
And shall—a thousand more.

And hither is young Romilly come,
And what may now forbid
That he, perhaps for the hundredth time,
Shall bound across THE STRID?

He sprang in glee,—for what cared he
That the River was strong and the rocks were steep!
But the Greyhound in the leash hung back,
And checked him in his leap.

The Boy is in the arms of Wharf,
And strangled with a merciless force;
For never more was young Romilly seen
Till he rose a lifeless Corse!

Now is there stillness in the Vale,
And long unspeaking sorrow:—
Wharf shall be to pitying hearts
A name more sad than Yarrow.

If for a Lover the Lady wept,
A solace she might borrow
From death, and from the passion of death;—
Old Wharf might heal her sorrow.

She weeps not for the Wedding-day
Which was to be to-morrow:
Her hope was a farther-looking hope,
And her's is a Mother's sorrow.

He was a Tree that stood alone,
And proudly did its branches wave;
And the Root of this delightful Tree
Was in her Husband's grave!

Long, long in darkness did she sit,
And her first words were, "Let there be
In Bolton, on the field of Wharf,
A stately Priory."

The stately Priory was reared,
And Wharf, as he moved along,
To Matins joined a mournful voice,
Nor failed at Even-song.

And the Lady prayed in heaviness
That looked not for relief:
But slowly did her succour come,
And a patience to her grief.

Oh! there is never sorrow of heart
That shall lack a timely end,
If but to God we turn, and ask
Of Him to be our Friend!

NOTES.

NOTES.

THE Poem of the White Doe of Rylstone is founded on a local tradition, and on the Ballad in Percy's Collection, entitled "The Rising of the North." The tradition is as follows: "About this time," not long after the Dissolution, "a White Doe, say the aged people of the neighbourhood, long continued to make a weekly pilgrimage from Rylstone over the fells of Bolton, and was constantly found in the Abbey Church-yard during divine service; after the close of which she returned home as regularly as the rest of the congregation."—DR WHITAKER'S *History of the Deanery of Craven.*—Rylstone was the property and residence of the Nortons, distinguished in that ill-advised and unfortunate Insurrection, which led me to connect with this tradition the principal circumstances of their fate, as recorded in the Ballad which I have thought it proper to annex.

The Rising in the North.

The subject of this ballad is the great Northern Insurrection in the 12th year of Elizabeth, 1569, which proved so fatal to Thomas Percy, the seventh Earl of Northumberland.

There had not long before been a secret negociation entered into between some of the Scottish and English nobility, to bring about a marriage between Mary Q. of Scots, at that time a prisoner in England, and the Duke of Norfolk, a nobleman of excellent character. This match was proposed to all the most considerable of the English nobility, and among the rest to the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, two noblemen very powerful in the North. As it seemed to promise a speedy and safe conclusion of the troubles in Scotland, with many advantages to the crown of England, they all consented to it, provided it should prove agreeable to Queen Elizabeth. The Earl of Leicester (Elizabeth's favourite) undertook to break the matter to her, but before he could find an opportunity, the affair had come to her ears by other hands, and she was thrown into a violent flame. The Duke of Norfolk, with several of his friends, was committed to the Tower, and summons were sent to the Northern Earls instantly to make their appearance at court. It is said that the Earl of Northumberland, who was a man of a mild and gentle nature,*

* Camden expressly says that he was violently attached to the Catholic Religion.

was deliberating with himself whether he should not obey the message, and rely upon the Queen's candour and clemency, when he was forced into desperate measures by a sudden report at midnight, Nov. 14, that a party of his enemies were come to seize his person. The Earl was then at his house at Topcliffe in Yorkshire. When, rising hastily out of bed, he withdrew to the Earl of Westmoreland at Brancepeth, where the country came in to them, and pressed them to take up arms in their own defence. They accordingly set up their standards, declaring their intent was to restore the ancient Religion, to get the succession of the crown firmly settled, and to prevent the destruction of the ancient nobility, &c. Their common banner (on which was displayed the cross, together with the five wounds of Christ) was borne by an ancient gentleman, Richard Norton, Esquire, who, with his sons, (among whom, Christopher, Marmaduke, and Thomas, are expressly named by Camden,) distinguished himself on this occasion. Having entered Durham, they tore the Bible, &c. and caused mass to be said there; they then marched on to Clifford-moor near Wetherby, where they mustered their men. * * * * * * * The two Earls, who spent their large estates in hospitality, and were extremely beloved on that account, were masters of little ready money; the E. of Northumberland bringing with him only 8000 crowns, and the E. of Westmoreland nothing at all, for the subsistence of their forces, they were not able to march to London, as they had at first intended.

In these circumstances, Westmoreland began so visibly to despond, that many of his men slunk away, though Northumberland still kept up his resolution, and was master of the field till December 13, when the Earl of Sussex, accompanied with Lord Hunsden and others, having marched out of York at the head of a large body of forces, and being followed by a still larger army under the command of Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, the insurgents retreated northward towards the borders, and there dismissing their followers, made their escape into Scotland. Though this insurrection had been suppressed with so little bloodshed, the Earl of Sussex and Sir George Bowes, marshal of the army, put vast numbers to death by martial law, without any regular trial. The former of these caused at Durham sixty-three constables to be hanged at once. And the latter made his boast, that for sixty miles in length, and forty in breadth, betwixt Newcastle and Wetherby, there was hardly a town or village wherein he had not executed some of the inhabitants. This exceeds the cruelties practised in the West after Monmouth's rebellion.

Such is the account collected from Stow, Speed, Camden, Guthrie, Carte, and Rapin; it agrees, in most particulars, with the following Ballad, apparently the production of some northern minstrel.—

LISTEN, lively lordings all,
Lithe and listen unto mee,
And I will sing of a noble earle,
The noblest earle in the north countrie.

Earle Percy is into his garden gone,
And after him walks his fair leddie:
I heard a bird sing in mine ear,
That I must either fight, or flee.

Now heaven forefend, my dearest lord,
That ever such harm should hap to thee;
But goe to London to the court,
And fair fall truth and honestie.

Now nay, now nay, my ladye gay,
Alas! thy counsell suits not mee;
Mine enemies prevail so fast,
That at the court I may not bee.

O goe to the court yet, good my lord,
And take thy gallant men with thee;
If any dare to do you wrong,
Then your warrant they may bee.

Now nay, now nay, thou ladye faire,
The court is full of subtiltie:
And if I goe to the court, ladye,
Never more I may thee see.

Yet goe to the court, my lord, she sayes,
And I myselfe will ryde wi' thee:

At court then for my dearest lord,
His faithful borrowe I will bee.

Now nay, now nay, my ladye deare;
Far lever had I lose my life,
Than leave among my cruell foes
My love in jeopardy and strife.

But come thou hither, my little foot-page,
Come thou hither unto mee,
To Maister Norton thou must goe
In all the haste that ever may bee.

Commend me to that gentleman,
And beare this letter here fro mee;
And say that earnestly I praye,
He will ryde in my companie.

One while the little foot-page went,
And another while he ran;
Untill he came to his journey's end,
The little foot-page never blan.

When to that gentleman he came,
Down he kneeled on his knee;
And took the letter betwixt his hands,
And lett the gentleman it see.

And when the letter it was redd,
Affore that goodlye companie,
I wis if you the truthe wold know,
There was many a weeping eye.

He sayd, Come thither, Christopher Norton,
A gallant youth thou seem'st to bee;
What dost thou counsell me, my sonne,
Now that good earle's in jeopardy?

Father, my counselle's fair and free;
That erle he is a noble lord,
And whatsoever to him you hight,
I would not have you breake your word.

Gramercy, Christopher, my sonne,
Thy counsell well it liketh mee,
And if we speed and 'scape with life,
Well advanced shalt thou bee.

Come you hither, my nine good sonnes,
Gallant men I trowe you bee:
How many of you, my children deare,
Will stand by that good erle and mee?

Eight of them did answer make,
Eight of them spake hastilie,
O Father, till the day we dye
We'll stand by that good erle and thee.

Gramercy, now, my children deare,
You shew yourselves right bold and brave,
And whethersoe'er I live or dye,
A father's blessing you shall have.

But what say'st thou, O Francis Norton,
Thou art mine eldest sonne and heire:

Somewhat lies brooding in thy breast;
Whatever it bee, to mee declare.

Father, you are an aged man,
Your head is white, your beard is gray;
It were a shame at these your years
For you to ryse in such a fray.

Now fye upon thee, coward Francis,
Thou never learned'st this of mee;
When thou wert young and tender of age,
Why did I make soe much of thee?

But, father, I will wend with you,
Unarm'd and naked will I bee;
And he that strikes against the crowne,
Ever an ill death may he dee.

Then rose that reverend gentleman,
And with him came a goodlye band
To join with the brave Earle Percy,
And all the flower o' Northumberland.

With them the noble Nevill came,
The erle of Westmoreland was hee;
At Wetherbye they mustered their host,
Thirteen thousand fair to see.

Lord Westmorland his ancyent raisde,
The Dun Bull he rays'd on hye,
And three Dogs with golden collars
Were there set out most royallye.

Erle Percy there his ancyent spread,
The Halfe Moone shining all soe faire;
The Nortons ancyent had the Crosse,
And the five wounds our Lord did beare.

Then Sir George Bowes he straitwaye rose,
After them some spoile to make:
Those noble erles turned back againe,
And aye they vowed that knight to take.

That baron he to his castle fled,
To Barnard castle then fled hee.
The uttermost walles were eathe to win,
The earles have wonne them presentlie.

The uttermost walles were lime and bricke;
But though they won them soon anone,
Long ere they wan their innermost walles,
For they were cut in rocke and stone.

Then news unto leeve London came
In all the speed that ever might bee,
And word is brought to our royall queene
Of the rysing in the North countrie.

Her grace she turned her round about,
And like a royall queene shee swore,
I will ordayne them such a breakfast,
As never was in the North before.

Shee caused thirty thousand men be rays'd,
With horse and harneis faire to see;

She caused thirty thousand men be raised
To take the earles i' th' North countrie.

Wi' them the false Erle Warwicke went,
The Erle Sussex and the Lord Hunsden,
Untill they to York castle came
I wiss they never stint ne blan.

Now spred thy ancyent, Westmoreland,
Thy dun Bull faine would we spye:
And thou, the Erle of Northumberland,
Now rayse thy Halfe Moone on hye.

But the dun bulle is fled and gone,
And the halfe moone vanished away:
The Erles, though they were brave and bold,
Against soe many could not stay.

Thee, Norton, wi' thine eight good sonnes,
They doomed to dye, alas! for ruth!
Thy reverend lockes thee could not save,
Nor them their faire and blooming youthe.

Wi' them full many a gallant wight
They cruellye bereav'd of life:
And many a child made fatherlesse,
And widowed many a tender wife.

"Bolton Priory," says Dr Whitaker in his excellent book, the History and Antiquities of the Deanry of Craven, "stands upon a beautiful curvature of the Wharf, on a level sufficient-

ly elevated to protect it from inundations, and low enough for every purpose of picturesque effect.

"Opposite to the East window of the Priory Church, the river washes the foot of a rock nearly perpendicular, and of the richest purple, where several of the mineral beds, which break out, instead of maintaining their usual inclination to the horizon, are twisted by some inconceivable process, into undulating and spiral lines. To the South all is soft and delicious; the eye reposes upon a few rich pastures, a moderate reach of the river, sufficiently tranquil to form a mirror to the sun, and the bounding hills beyond, neither too near nor too lofty to exclude, even in winter, any portion of his rays.

"But, after all, the glories of Bolton are on the North. Whatever the most fastidious taste could require to constitute a perfect landscape is not only found here, but in its proper place. In front, and immediately under the eye, is a smooth expanse of park-like enclosure, spotted with native elm, ash, &c. of the finest growth: on the right a skirting oak wood, with jutting points of grey rock; on the left a rising copse. Still forward are seen the aged groves of Bolton Park, the growth of centuries; and farther yet, the barren and rocky distances of Simon-seat and Barden Fell contrasted with the warmth, fertility, and luxuriant foliage of the valley below.

"About half a mile above Bolton the Valley closes, and either side of the Wharf is overhung by solemn woods, from

which huge perpendicular masses of grey rock jut out at intervals.

"This sequestered scene was almost inaccessible till of late, that ridings have been cut on both sides of the River, and the most interesting points laid open by judicious thinnings in the woods. Here a tributary stream rushes from a waterfall, and bursts through a woody glen to mingle its waters with the Wharf: there the Wharf itself is nearly lost in a deep cleft in the rock, and next becomes a horned flood enclosing a woody island—sometimes it reposes for a moment, and then resumes its native character, lively, irregular, and impetuous.

"The cleft mentioned above is the tremendous STRID. This chasm, being incapable of receiving the winter floods, has formed, on either side, a broad strand of naked gritstone full of rock-basons, or 'pots of the Linn,' which bear witness to the restless impetuosity of so many Northern torrents. But, if here Wharf is lost to the eye, it amply repays another sense by its deep and solemn roar, like 'the Voice of the angry Spirit of the Waters,' heard far above and beneath, amidst the silence of the surrounding woods.

"The terminating object of the landscape is the remains of Barden Tower, interesting from their form and situation, and still more so from the recollections which they excite."

From Bolton's old monastic Tower.—P. 3.

It is to be regretted that at the present day Bolton Abbey wants this ornament: but the Poem, according to the imagination of the Poet, is composed in Queen Elizabeth's time. "Formerly," says Dr Whitaker, "over the Transept was a tower. This is proved not only from the mention of bells at the Dissolution, when they could have had no other place, but from the pointed roof of the choir, which must have terminated westward, in some building of superior height to the ridge."

A rural Chapel, neatly drest.—P. 5.

"The Nave of the Church having been reserved at the Dissolution, for the use of the Saxon Cure, is still a parochial Chapel; and, at this day, is as well kept as the neatest English Cathedral."

Who sate in the shade of the Prior's Oak.—P. 5.

"At a small distance from the great gateway stood the Prior's Oak, which was felled about the year 1720, and sold for 70*l*. According to the price of wood at that time, it could scarcely have contained less than 1400 feet of timber."

When Lady Aaliza mourn'd.—P. 15.

The detail of this tradition may be found in Dr Whit-

aker's book, and in the foregoing Poem, The Force of Prayer, &c.

Pass, pass who will, yon chantry door.—P. 16.

"At the East end of the North aisle of Bolton Priory Church is a chantry belonging to Bethmesly Hall, and a vault, where, according to tradition, the Claphams" (who inherited this estate, by the female line from the Mauliverers) "were interred upright." John de Clapham, of whom this ferocious act is recorded, was a name of great note in his time; "he was a vehement partisan of the House of Lancaster, in whom the spirit of his chieftains, the Cliffords, seemed to survive."

Who loved the Shepherd Lord to meet.—P. 18.

In the second volume of Poems published by the author, will be found one, entitled, "Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle, upon the Restoration of Lord Clifford the Shepherd to the Estates and Honours of his Ancestors." To that Poem is annexed an account of this personage, chiefly extracted from Burn's and Nicholson's History of Cumberland and Westmoreland. It gives me pleasure to add these further particulars concerning him from Dr Whitaker, who says, "he retired to the solitude of Barden, where he seems to have enlarged the tower out of a common keeper's lodge, and where he found a retreat equally favourable to taste, to instruction, and to devotion. The narrow limits of his resi-

dence shew that he had learned to despise the pomp of greatness, and that a small train of servants could suffice him, who had lived to the age of thirty a servant himself. I think this nobleman resided here almost entirely when in Yorkshire, for all his charters which I have seen are dated at Barden.

"His early habits, and the want of those artificial measures of time which even shepherds now possess, had given him a turn for observing the motions of the heavenly bodies, and, having purchased such an apparatus as could then be procured, he amused and informed himself by those pursuits, with the aid of the Canons of Bolton, some of whom are said to have been well versed in what was then known of the science.

"I suspect this nobleman to have been sometimes occupied in a more visionary pursuit, and probably in the same company.

"For, from the family evidences, I have met with two MSS. on the subject of Alchemy, which, from the character, spelling, &c., may almost certainly be referred to the reign of Henry the Seventh. If these were originally deposited with the MSS. of the Cliffords, it might have been for the use of this nobleman. If they were brought from Bolton at the Dissolution, they must have been the work of those Canons whom he almost exclusively conversed with.

"In these peaceful employments Lord Clifford spent the whole reign of Henry the Seventh, and the first years of his

son. But in the year 1513, when almost sixty years old, he was appointed to a principal command over the army which fought at Flodden, and shewed that the military genius of the family had neither been chilled in him by age, nor extinguished by habits of peace.

" He survived the battle of Flodden ten years, and died April 23d, 1523, aged about 70. I shall endeavour to appropriate to him a tomb, vault, and chantry, in the choir of the church of Bolton, as I should be sorry to believe that he was deposited when dead at a distance from the place which in his life-time he loved so well.

" By his last will he appointed his body to be interred at Shap if he died in Westmoreland; or at Bolton if he died in Yorkshire."

With respect to the Canons of Bolton, Dr Whitaker shews from MSS. that not only alchemy but astronomy was a favourite pursuit with them.

Ye Watchmen upon Brancepeth Towers.—P. 43.

Brancepeth Castle stands near the river Were, a few miles from the city of Durham. It formerly belonged to the Nevilles, Earls of Westmoreland. See Dr Percy's account.

Of mitred Thurston, what a Host
He conquered!—P. 55.

See the Historians for the account of this memorable battle, usually denominated the Battle of the Standard.

In that other day of Neville's Cross.—P. 56.

" In the night before the battle of Durham was strucken and begun, the 17th day of October, *anno* 1346, there did appear to John Fosser, then Prior of the abbey of Durham, commanding him to take the holy Corporax-cloth, wherewith St Cuthbert did cover the chalice when he used to say mass, and to put the same holy relique like to a banner-cloth upon the point of a spear, and the next morning to go and repair to a place on the west side of the city of Durham, called the Red Hills, where the Maid's Bower wont to be, and there to remain and abide till the end of the battle. To which vision, the Prior obeying, and taking the same for a revelation of God's grace and mercy by the mediation of holy St Cuthbert, did accordingly the next morning, with the monks of the said abbey, repair to the said Red Hills, and there most devoutly humbling and prostrating themselves in prayer for the victory in the said battle: (a great multitude of the Scots running and pressing by them, with intention to have spoiled them, yet had no power to commit any violence under such holy persons, so occupied in prayer, being protected and defended by the mighty Providence of Almighty God, and by the mediation of Holy St Cuthbert, and the presence of the holy relique.) And, after many conflicts and warlike exploits there had and done between the English men and the King of Scots and his company, the said battle ended, and the victory was obtained, to the great

overthrow and confusion of the Scots, their enemies: And then the said Prior and monks, accompanied with Ralph Lord Nevil, and John Nevil his son, and the Lord Percy, and many other nobles of England, returned home and went to the abbey church, there joining in hearty prayer and thanksgiving to God and holy St Cuthbert for the victory atchieved that day."

This battle was afterwards called the Battle of Neville's Cross from the following circumstance:—

"On the west side of the city of Durham, where two roads pass each other, a most notable, famous, and goodly cross of stone-work was erected, and set up to the honour of God for the victory there obtained in the field of battle, and known by the name of Nevil's Cross, and built at the sole cost of the Lord Ralph Nevil, one of the most excellent and chief persons in the said battle." The Relique of St Cuthbert afterwards became of great importance in military events. For soon after this battle, says the same author, "The prior caused a goodly and sumptuous banner to be made, (which is then described at great length,) and in the midst of the same banner-cloth was the said holy relique and corporax-cloth enclosed, &c. &c. and so sumptuously finished, and absolutely perfected, this banner was dedicated to holy St Cuthbert, of intent and purpose, that for the future it should be carried to any battle, as occasion should serve; and was never carried and shewed at any battle but by the especial grace of God Almighty, and the mediation of holy

St Cuthbert, it brought home victory; which banner-cloth, after the dissolution of the abbey, fell into the possession of Dean WHITTINGHAM, whose wife was called KATHARINE, being a French woman, (as is most credibly reported by eye-witnesses,) did most injuriously burn the same in her fire, to the open contempt and disgrace of all ancient and goodly reliques."—Extracted from a book entitled, "Durham Cathedral, as it stood before the Dissolution of the Monastery." It appears, from the old metrical History, that the above-mentioned banner was carried by the Earl of Surry to Flodden Field.

An Edifice of warlike frame
Stands single (Norton Tower its name.)—P. 81.

It is so called to this day, and is thus described by Dr Whitaker. "Rylstone Fell yet exhibits a monument of the old warfare between the Nortons and Cliffords. On a point of very high ground, commanding an immense prospect, and protected by two deep ravines, are the remains of a square tower, expressly said by Dodsworth to have been built by Richard Norton. The walls are of strong grout-work, about four feet thick. It seems to have been three stories high. Breaches have been industriously made in all the sides, almost to the ground, to render it untenable.

"But Norton Tower was probably a sort of pleasure-house in summer, as there are, adjoining to it, several large mounds,

(two of them are pretty entire,) of which no other account can be given than that they were butts for large companies of archers.

" The place is savagely wild, and admirably adapted to the uses of a watch-tower."

——— *despoil and desolation*
O'er Rylstone's fair domain have blown.—P. 112.

" After the attainder of Richard Norton, his estates were forfeited to the crown, where they remained till the 2d or 3d of James; they were then granted to Francis Earl of Cumberland." From an accurate survey made at that time, several particulars have been extracted by Dr W. It appears that the mansion-house was then in decay. Immediately adjoining is a close, called the Vivery, so called undoubtedly from the French Vivier, or modern Latin Viverium; for there are near the house large remains of a pleasure-ground, such as were introduced in the earlier part of Elizabeth's time, with topiary works, fish-ponds, an island, &c. The whole township was ranged by an hundred and thirty red deer, the property of the Lord, which, together with the wood, had, after the attainder of Mr Norton, been committed to Sir Stephen Tempest. The wood, it seems, had been abandoned to depredations, before which time it appears that the neighbourhood must have exhibited a forest-like and sylvan scene. In this survey, among the old tenants, is

mentioned one Richard Kitchen, butler to Mr Norton, who rose in rebellion with his master, and was executed at Ripon."

In the deep fork of Amerdale.—P. 120.

"At the extremity of the parish of Burnsal, the valley of Wharf forks off into two great branches, one of which retains the name of Wharfdale to the source of the river; the other is usually called Littondale, but more anciently and properly Amerdale. Dern-brook, which runs along an obscure valley from the N.W. is derived from a Teutonic word, signifying concealment."—Dr Whitaker.

When the Bells of Rylstone played
Their Sabbath music—"God us ayde."—P. 123.

On one of the bells of Rylstone church, which seems coeval with the building of the tower, is this cypher, I. N. for John Norton, and the motto, "God us ayde."

The grassy rock-encircled Pound.—P. 125.

Which is thus described by Dr Whitaker:—"On the plain summit of the hill are the foundations of a strong wall, stretching from the S.W. to the N.E. corner of the tower, and to the edge of a very deep glen. From this glen, a ditch, several hundred yards long, runs south to another deep and rugged ravine. On the N. and W. where the banks are

very steep, no wall or mound is discoverable, palin[illegible] the only fence that would stand on such ground.

From the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, it a[illegible] that such pounds for deer, sheep, &c. were far from [illegible] uncommon in the south of Scotland. The principle of [illegible] was something like that of a wire mouse-trap. On t[illegible] clivity of a steep hill, the bottom and sides of whic[illegible] fenced so as to be impassable, a wall was constructed [illegible] level with the surface on the outside, yet so high withi[illegible] without wings it was impossible to escape in the op[illegible] direction. Care was probably taken that these enc[illegible] should contain better feed than the neigh[illegible] forests; and whoever is acquainted with th[illegible] sequacious animals, will easily conceive, tha[illegible] once tempted to descend into the snare, an h[illegible]

I cannot conclude without recommending to the n[illegible] all lovers of beautiful scenery—Bolton Abbey and its [illegible] bourhood. This enchanting spot belongs to the D[illegible] Devonshire; and the superintendance of it has for [illegible] years been entrusted to the Rev. William Carr, w[illegible] most skilfully opened out its features; and in what [illegible] has added, has done justice to the place by working [illegible] invisible hand of art in the very spirit of nature.

THE END.

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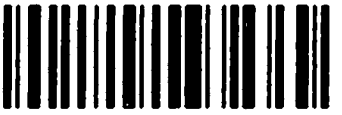
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